

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for purifying exhaust gases, comprising:  
an HC adsorption-purifying catalyst including:  
an HC adsorbent layer on a substrate, and an oxidizing catalyst layer on the HC adsorbent layer; and  
a three-way catalyst disposed on an upstream side of the flow of exhaust gases with respect to the HC adsorption-purifying catalyst, wherein  
a noble metal is loaded higher on a high loading portion disposed on an upstream part of the three-way catalyst than on an ordinary portion of the three-way catalyst, and wherein  
a loading amount of the high loading portion of the three-way catalyst is twice or more of a loading amount of the ordinary portion of the three-way catalyst.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Original) The apparatus set forth in claim 1, wherein the high loading portion of the three-way catalyst is formed within a range of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of an overall length of the three-way catalyst ranging from an upstream end of the three-way catalyst.

4. (Original) The apparatus set forth in claim 1, wherein the HC adsorption-purifying catalyst includes the HC adsorbent and the oxidizing catalyst with a proportion of the HC adsorbent with respect to the oxidizing catalyst from 5 : 1 to 2 : 3 by volume.